PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF ETHNIC STUDIES

REVIEW PROCESS

The Department of Ethnic Studies prepared a self-study following program review guidelines. A two-person external team visited the campus, reviewed the self-study document, interviewed faculty and staff, University administrators, undergraduate students (Ethnic Studies) and graduate students (American Culture Studies), and submitted a report. The Program Review Committee (PRC) read the self-study and the external report, and the PRC liaison for the Ethnic Studies review discussed the program review documents with the Chair and faculty. The PRC discussed the program review of the Department with the Dean of Arts & Sciences. This document reflects the PRC’s findings and recommendations.

SUMMARY OF THE SELF-STUDY

Introduction and Mission

Ethnic studies is “an interdisciplinary and comparative field” informed by a wide array of theoretical and social issues applied to the “socio-economic and historical forces” shaping the “development of diverse population groups in the United States” as well as within diasporic contexts. The Department focuses on the study of “general principles that shape racial and ethnic relations in structural contexts of power and their intersections with gender, sexuality, and class.” Drawing from the study of these ethnic identities over “time, cultures, and geographical space,” the Department draws “larger theoretical lessons from comparative studies of population groups, including diasporic experiences.”

Department faculty teach general education courses, departmental courses for majors and minors, graduate courses for cognate and certificate studies, and courses within the American Culture Studies degree programs. The Department also supplies courses for other majors on campus, including Film Studies and Africana Studies. The multi-faceted mission of the Department expands from the central concern of teaching courses within the discipline, broadly defined, for a variety of professional and/or scholarly careers, to the larger goals of generating knowledge and cultural understanding. The forums for this mission include the classroom, University campus life, professional venues, and the larger community through colloquia, faculty publications, and sponsored lectures.
Articulated research and teaching foci for the Department include: Latina/Latinos, Native Americans, Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnic Relations, Gender and Sexuality, Africana Studies, Film/Media and Popular Culture, Immigration and Diaspora Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Urban Studies, Arab American Studies, Border Studies, Social Movements, Mexican Studies, and Asian Americans.

History, Recent Events, Faculty and Staff Resources

The Department was established in 1970. Supporting the University cultural diversity requirement through leadership and example, faculty from the Department played a central role in establishing the cultural diversity requirement in 1985. The current chair assumed leadership in 1997. During the past several years the Department has worked to replace several retirement lines, expand and bring the curriculum up to date, and hire faculty qualified to teach graduate offerings in ethnic studies. In doing so they have worked through “a deliberative process” to emphasize “the transnational, migratory, and diasporic dimensions of race and ethnicity and their intersections with gender and sexuality.” Despite the loss of two tenured and one probationary faculty member, and the non-renewal of an instructor, during the period 1998-2000, the number of full-time faculty is now 10.5 (double the number of faculty in 1992). Three hold joint appointments, one is a lecturer, and two are instructors. Two hold the rank of associate professor; one is a full professor. Currently the Department is searching to fill an approved hire in African-American cultural studies (tenure track). In addition, eleven part-time faculty (including graduate students) teach lower division and general education courses.

The unit funds four graduate assistants ($36,333 from the Graduate College). In addition, two additional graduate assistant lines are funded through American Culture Studies. Their duties include teaching one course each semester with additional assignments such as serving as research assistants to faculty. Funding is provided for professional development along with adequate work/study environment.

It should be noted that during the past few years the Department’s dependence on supplemental faculty has decreased given the increase in regular faculty lines.

The teaching load for the Department for tenured and probationary faculty is five courses per year, deployed in a 3/2 or 2/3 assignment. Full time instructors teach four courses each semester.

The Department has one full-time secretary and employs three work study students.
Majors (undergraduate, graduate courses, and certificate program), Recruitment, and Enrollments

As of fall 2001, the Department has 19 undergraduate majors (7 recruited since May 2001) and 14 minors. The number of graduates in the major was nine students in 1994-1995, three in 1996-1997, and four in 2000-2001. The average ACT score for current majors is 19.5. Recently the Department has placed an emphasis on recruitment. The Department has also worked to build retention and recruitment forums, such as the listproc for ethnic studies and early identification of potential majors through caring advising practices.

The Department has become a central player in the reorganized plan for graduate degrees in American Culture Studies. The Department now lists eleven graduate level courses. Several faculty supervise or serve on graduate committees.

Enrollments in the graduate certificate program are starting to emerge (the program is less than two years old). Three certificate students have finished and have been placed. The unit anticipates a regular cohort of five to seven certificate students each year.

Since 1997 the unit has seen a steady increase in generated SCHs (244 in 1997 to 338 in 2001). This indicates a general trend towards good enrollments.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The Department has articulated learning outcomes for the baccalaureate degree. No learning outcomes have been established for the graduate certificate.

Assessment plans are starting to emerge. A capstone course has been developed (ETHN 400 Senior Project). Until a larger cohort of majors is formed, the course will be taught as an independent study. The self-study states that “the department will convene a committee” to review “the assessment program in general next year.”

Details of the coordination of ETHN 101 (Introduction to Ethnic Studies) reveal careful attention to course assessment grounded in learning objectives, instructor mentoring, and evaluation. However, part time faculty and graduate students carry much of the teaching load for this course.

Financial Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Detailed breakdown of the operating budget is not provided in the self-study. However, the self-study notes (Chart 14) that the unit has $747,667 for personnel expenditures and $39,795 for general operating expenditures—approximately $30,000 as a base allocation and the rest to support programming activities such as the Working Papers Series, lecture series, and colloquia.
The self-study concludes that information from the Office of Institutional Research indicates the Department operates in a “cost-effective” way; when compared to peer institutions, the Department was the most cost effective among them.

The Department is located in Shatzel Hall (rooms on the second and third floor include offices, storage rooms, and a conference room). Nine of the full-time faculty have desktop computers and access to the central printer (the remaining two full-time faculty have offices in other buildings on campus). Eleven part-time faculty have computers and access to the central computer; two have access to a printer in room 345.

**Faculty Quality and Productivity**

The self-study documents a sustained record of research productivity since 1992 with publications placed in important professional venues. In recent years faculty have also worked to secure external funds for research, including a $55,000 grant from the National Research Council/HUD in 2001-2002. Faculty quality is also revealed through the list of professional affiliations and responsibilities, including various editorial boards and manuscript reviewer assignments.

Select faculty also boast important community service with the Urban Affairs Center (Toledo), the Chapman Learning Community, the American Indian Services, and the American Indian Intertribal Association. Ties have also been developed with various research groups on campus, such as the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society.

In addition, the unit annually supports campus visits of prominent scholars and creative artists and co-produces the Working Papers Series in Historical Systems, Peoples, and Cultures. The self-study contains an impressive listing of these activities only referenced in this summary (see pages 43-44).

**Concerns and Unit Planning**

The self-study articulates the need for additional resources to support faculty travel, faculty recruitment, and Departmental programming. The self-study also suggests the need for help maintaining the Departmental service load expectations. Within the unit plan, several additional faculty lines are requested:

The Department’s unit plan focuses on:
1) course development (at least fourteen new courses at all levels),
2) increased enrollments in a variety of areas of study including proposed minors,
3) enhanced graduate offerings,
4) faculty hires,
5) continued emphasis on securing external funding and supporting faculty research, including the sponsorship of an tri-annual major conference and continuing the Working Papers Series,
6) inter-unit alignments including several new joint hires and the “redeployment” of visiting lines,
7) and the establishment of an endowed faculty line and faculty-supported student scholarships, among other development goals.

These goals are presented within a six-year framework beginning in 2002.

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS REVIEWS

This is the first cycle of academic program review for the Department.

SUMMARY OF EXTERNAL REPORT

The external team applauded the completeness and adequacy of the self-study. They noted concerns in the following areas: the distribution or evenness of faculty productivity, Departmental connections with Africana Studies, and the service contributions of specific faculty. In addition, the team could not speak to the need for the proposed minor in Latino Studies or Native American Studies without additional information concerning enrollment patterns.

The external report listed the following as specific strengths and weakness within the Department:

Strengths Noted by the External Review Team:

1) Recent recruitment of junior faculty with strong credentials in ethnic studies and research/publication orientation.
2) Faculty productivity in the area of research and external funding is strong.
3) Leadership within the program is strong.
4) Department faculty collaborate with numerous departments, programs, and institutes across the campus;
5) Faculty expressed a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching and the recruitment of more majors;
6) Faculty plan to develop additional courses on Latinos; they also plan to identify other units with which to cross-list courses, in an effort to address the interests of students.
7) Collaboration with American Culture Studies gives the Department a graduate component and has moved its ranking up among the few national ethnic studies programs/departments with a graduate program.

Weaknesses Noted by the External Review Team:

1) Staffing of 100 level courses is overwhelmingly graduate students.
2) Research and travel support is inadequate. The Department is currently limited in its ability to support the faculty and risks losing highly qualified teachers and researchers.
3) Probationary faculty members are burdened with major service responsibilities, including chairing the personnel committee and advising undergraduate students.
4) Two of the tenured faculty and one assistant professor do not contribute to service in the unit.
5) The Departmental expectation of 40% teaching, 40% research/creative work, and 20% service is not being met by associate professors in the unit.
6) The external reviewers reported that probationary faculty encounter a hostile environment in the unit resulting from the lack of collegial and professional behavior of senior faculty.
7) The Department lacks group-specific courses on African Americans.
8) The number of undergraduate courses taught by graduate students and non-faculty instructors is high.
9) The external reviewers were concerned that confusion exists between the mission of the Department and the newly created Africana Studies program, thus placing the Department in competition for scarce human and financial resources.

Responses to the Unit’s Planning

The external review team notes that the unit plan includes attention to recruiting faculty through joint appointments and to increasing course enrollments and majors. The plan also articulates approaches to enhanced graduate education, unit visibility, research productivity, and fund raising.

Concerns with the unit plan include the following:
1) It does not address the need for expanded African American offerings.
2) The desire to develop a minor in Latino Studies does not consider “coordination with other units to cross-list courses.”
3) Plans do not propose to include more full-time faculty in general education classes.
4) Plans for increased graduate courses ignore the vital pedagogical differences between teaching courses for the certificate program and teaching courses within ACS.
5) And finally, plans for faculty participation in development activities place an unrealistic burden on faculty, especially untenured faculty.

Specific Recommendations from the External Team

Recommendations from the external team focused on issues of pedagogy, Departmental focus, orientation of the certificate program, the Africana Studies issue, staffing, budget, and fundraising.

The external report recommends that the Department should:
1) design a mass lecture format for general education courses to ease staffing and tighten “quality control” of instruction;
2) drop the certificate program and focus on teaching within the ACS program;
3) include both group-specific and thematic, comparative elements in the Departmental focus;
4) rethink the placement and purpose of Africana Studies at BGSU;
5) hire a senior faculty member to address concerns with Departmental service duties, such as upcoming promotion and tenure reviews;
6) provide additional funds to support faculty travel; and
7) redirect development efforts (student scholarships, etc) to appropriate offices on campus.

MEETING WITH DEPARTMENT FACULTY

After receiving the external report, it was clear that the meeting of the PRC liaison with the Department faculty would be an important step in completing a fair and productive program review. With one exception, all Department faculty participated at this meeting in which several important issues were addressed:

1) Climate within the Department: The expressed concern about tension within the Department between senior and junior faculty does not appear to be an appropriate description. All tenure-track faculty at the meeting spoke candidly about what they see as a very limited and specific issue, not a general problem.
2) Africana Studies: Specific Department faculty who teach within the Africana Studies program connect with and feel welcome within the Department. Nevertheless, some Department faculty do have concerns about how the Africana Studies program might impact future plans to perhaps form a minor in African American Studies and desire better communication with the leadership of Africana Studies.
3) Departmental Focus: The Department embraces the richness of ethnic-specific areas of study from a variety of theoretical perspectives (has always done so and will continue to do so). A lengthy discussion about this concern resulted in a refinement of the unit’s definition of focus, details of which will appear in the next section of this report.
4) Certificate Program: The Department rejects the proposal to drop the certificate program, but will limit development of this area to address the research interests or needs of graduate students rather than as a “service” certificate for nontraditional students at this time
5) General Education Courses: The faculty do teach at all levels of instruction (including general education courses) and take pride in the careful mentoring and oversight given the introductory courses. However, in the case of ETHN 101, they reject the model of a mass lecture course to meet with what they know to be unsubstantiated concerns about quality instruction and mentoring of teaching assistants.
PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE FINDINGS

The self-study is carefully written and provides adequate detail for an overview of Departmental mission, current status, and future plans. The tables, figures, and appendices appear to be carefully selected and informative. The self-study clearly shows the energy and accomplished intelligence of this faculty.

Based on the self-study and the results of this meeting, the PRC finds the Department faculty to be energetically engaged with the process of building an outstanding undergraduate and graduate program. The quality of faculty research and publication is first-rate. The fact that some faculty have been successful in securing external funding for research is to be commended. The Department has nurtured and sustained a reputation for excellent programming in various forms (within the Department and across campus), including the annual Working Papers Series. In addition, the Department contributes courses to various degree programs and requirements, including the University cultural diversity requirement, American Culture Studies, Africana Studies, and Film Studies. Some Department faculty have assumed important roles within the ACS doctoral program. Sensitive to the need for recruitment, the Department has moved forward to address that issue along with the first steps in student learning assessment.

The PRC finds that the external reviewers’ emphasis on Africana Studies was misplaced, inasmuch as that program was not being reviewed. The PRC also finds that the external report emphasized performance of specific individuals more than was called for in a program-level review. Consequently, the PRC findings and recommendations will make no further mention of those issues.

Findings Requiring Action

1. Departmental focus. The core of the Departmental focus is racial communities of color in the U.S. but it also investigates these communities within their diasporic and transnational formations. This emphasis is evident in the curriculum. For instance, the Department offers classes that examine how international developments (such as globalization and immigration) impact on and transform U.S. racial and ethnic groups; it also offers classes that explore representations of racial and ethnic groups in media, film, and popular culture. The conceptual framework that informs Departmental teaching and research is comparative and interdisciplinary.

However, the list of areas of focus in the self-study is quite long. For the idea of “focus” to have meaning and utility, the focal areas must be relatively small in number and have clearly articulated relationships to one another. The PRC finds that the essence of the Department’s focus and can be extracted from the self-study, but it is not clearly identified or articulated.

The Department faculty produced the following working draft detailing a “definition of focus.”
Ethnic Studies primarily focuses on historically subordinated racial groups in the U.S. These groups are African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. The Department offers a multitude of specific classes on these groups. Examples of these group-specific classes include the following: ETHN 312, ETHN 320, ETHN 361, and ETHN 130. In addition to looking at the specific experiences of these four groups individually, we offer courses which compare and contrast the experiences of the four groups in the U.S. Examples of these classes include ETHN 201 and ETHN 301. We also teach courses that compare and contrast the experiences of U.S. racial and ethnic minorities with the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in other parts of the world. Examples of these classes include ETHN 430 and ETHN 300.

We also offer classes which examine how international developments (such as globalization and immigration) impact on and transform U.S. racial and ethnic groups. Further, the Department offers classes that explore representations of racial and ethnic groups in media, film, and popular culture. Clearly, the core of the Departmental focus is racial communities of color in the U.S. but we also investigate these communities within their diasporic and transnational formations. As such the conceptual framework that informs our teaching and research is comparative and interdisciplinary.

2. Undergraduate programs. The nurturing of the Department’s undergraduate programs (majors, minors, and general education courses) must remain a priority. Contributions to other programs are important, but they should be secondary to courses needed to support the ethnic studies major, the ethnic studies minor, and the general education program. In this regard, the PRC finds it is unrealistic to plan for undergraduate concentrations in film studies and popular culture within the Department, beyond offering a small number of upper-level courses in the major. Given that faculty resources are limited, the Department is also urged to carefully balance the instructional needs of the undergraduate program with the expanding demands of graduate teaching in ACS, giving greater weight to the former of these two.

The PRC finds that it is of fundamental importance that all Department faculty teach regularly in the general education program, at the 100 level. Such a commitment to the undergraduate program will aid in the recruitment of majors and minors, an issue of considerable importance to the long-term vitality of the Department.

3. Assessment. The faculty must focus on implementing the proposed assessment plan. Although the capstone course appears to be an appropriate venue for assessment, expectations for this approach must be clearly articulated, specifically given that the course will be taught as an independent study during the next few years. The College office and the Student Achievement Assessment Committee are both available to provide consultation and support for the Department’s assessment efforts. Progress in implementing assessment activities for the entire program should be a priority during the next year.
4. Curriculum. As noted above in the draft statement of focus, the Department primarily focuses on historically subordinated racial groups in the U.S. In addition, the Department’s approach extends to the comparison and contrast of the experiences of the four groups in the U.S. It also considers the comparison of the experiences of U.S. racial and ethnic minorities with the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in other parts of the world.

The integration and coordination of these approaches could be further refined. For instance, the curriculum could build on ethnic-specific tracks at the 100 and 200 level and lead to a comparative frame of study at the 300 and 400 level. A careful review of the curriculum during the next few years is needed to reflect such an articulated focus.

Following the recommendation of the external review team, the PRC urges the Department to explore the possibility of teaching ETHN 101 as a lecture course with break out sections. The PRC agrees that the prospect of a very large mass lecture is not the best way to teach this course. Instead, we suggest adopting a smaller cohort of students (perhaps 100) who meet once or twice a week for lecture and then once a week in break out sections (limited to 25 students) for discussion. Graduate students can play a significant role in staffing the break out sections, but such a strategy requires their training and support.

5. Certificate program. The Department’s plan to use the certificate program to support the research needs of graduate students is a good one. Expansion of the potential audience for this certificate program can be considered when enrollments and staffing allow.

6. ACS doctoral program. Participation of Department faculty in the ACS doctoral program appears to be a fruitful collaboration, supported by this program review. However, the Department’s primary commitment to undergraduate education must not be undercut by its participation in the ACS doctoral program.

7. Differential teaching load policy. Given the diversity of the Department’s mission, it is to be expected that faculty will contribute to this mission in different ways, according to their interests and expertise. Therefore, it stands to reason that the Department should have a policy on differential load. Faculty who are active advising doctoral students and who are productive in their research should be allowed to make a case for having some of their load reassigned to those duties. Faculty who are not active advising doctoral students and who are not active in research should be assigned a greater teaching load.

8. Professional development of new faculty. The mix of untenured and tenured faculty is heavily skewed toward untenured at the present time. This will not always be true, but the current situation presents some unusual and important problems. There is an unusually high need to mentor the strong new hires added to the program. The success of
the new faculty depends to a significant degree on the establishment of a well-articulated Departmental focus to set expectations.

There is an immediate concern for evaluations of untenured faculty, given that the Charter assigns this responsibility to tenured faculty. The Charter provides guidelines for appointing tenured faculty outside a department when additional faculty are needed to carry out such evaluations. One way for the Department to address this issue would be to select qualified tenured faculty from within the ACS doctoral faculty to participate in the annual review process, as a temporary measure during the next few years. This would not only address the current problem, it would also help to further connect Department faculty to the ACS program. Given that the number of tenured faculty will increase next year and will continue to do so during the following years, such review functions will soon be the jurisdiction of Department faculty.

Given the size of the operating budget in the Department, the PRC urges the Chair to consider ways to support professional development using Departmental resources.

9. Departmental service. It is important that the Department create an expectation for service as well as teaching and research. If the Chair cannot make progress within the Departmental structure to motivate all faculty to meet Departmental expectations for performance, the Dean should then be consulted to explore a full range of options to help the Department address individual concerns. Ultimately, the Chair must facilitate faculty interaction within the Department when specific concerns arise. Such concerns need to be addressed on an individual basis for the ultimate good of the entire program.

10. Development. Some of the Department’s resource needs might be approached through fund-raising. Such efforts must be coordinated through the Development office.

**PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on reviews of the self-study and external review documents, and consistent with the major findings that resulted from these reviews, the PRC makes the following recommendations. For detail about the rationalization of each recommendation, see the finding with the corresponding number, just above.

1) Departmental focus. The Department should revise its mission statement, including an articulation of the focus of the undergraduate curriculum, commensurate with current resources and enrollments. The revised mission will ground the rationale for requests for resources and serve to guide which activities will be pursued by the Department. Given the Department’s interdisciplinary approach, requests for additional faculty, including guest lines, should be coordinated with other units to increase interdisciplinary aspects of the program and connect the strengths of Department faculty with other units across campus. The revised mission statement should be presented to the Dean of Arts and Sciences for his approval by the end of fall semester 2002.
2) **Undergraduate programs.** The Department should develop a policy and procedure establishing the expectation that all faculty will teach 100 level general education courses in Ethnic Studies, each year. This policy should be presented to the Dean of Arts and Sciences for his approval by the end of fall semester 2002.

3) **Assessment.** The Department should begin implementation of the proposed assessment plan as soon as possible during the 2002-03 academic year. Assessment reports should be filed annually with the College office and with the Student Achievement Assessment Committee.

4) **Curriculum.** Several aspects of the curriculum should be reviewed and revised within the next two years.
   a) Review and revise the curriculum to clarify the relationship of ethnic-specific courses to the courses having a more comparative frame of study.
   b) Consider the creation of minors in specific content areas to support the Department’s ethnic-specific approach.
   c) To support the ethnic-specific courses, the PRC urges the Dean to allow the Department to continue the tenure-track search for a specialist in African-American culture as soon as possible.
   d) Explore the possibility of teaching ETHN 101 as a lecture course, with break out discussion sections led by graduate student.
   e) Consider forwarding upper level courses (specifically the courses cross-listed with Africana Studies) for general education credit.

5) **Certificate program.** Review and revise the certificate program so that it supports the research needs of graduate students.

6) **ACS doctoral program.** Continue to work with the ACS doctoral program, making this the primary graduate emphasis for the Department.

7) **Differential teaching load policy.** The Department should implement a differential teaching load policy. Only those faculty who are active advising doctoral students, publishing, and applying for external funding should be considered for a 3/2 load. The 3/2 load should not be considered a Departmental entitlement, but an assignment appropriate to demonstrated and ongoing commitment to graduate education. Tenured faculty who choose not to be active in scholarship or engaged with graduate education should be assigned a full teaching load. The policy should be presented to the Dean for his approval by fall, 2003.

8) **Professional development of new faculty.** The Chair should consult the Charter regarding the selection of outside faculty to carry out annual reviews and promotion and tenure reviews of untenured faculty. The use of qualified tenured faculty from within the ACS doctoral faculty for this purpose seems to present a good, temporary measure during the next few years.
   a) The Chair should support professional development using existing Departmental resources.
9) *Departmental service.* Expectations for service within the Department must be established in the Department’s promotion and tenure document and in Departmental policies and procedures for awarding merit. If some faculty show a consistent record of below-standard service performance, it is the Chair’s responsibility both to have that performance reflected and recorded in faculty evaluations and merit awards, as well as to engage the faculty in appropriate developmental activities.

10) *Development.* The Chair should meet with the Dean to discuss long-range plans in the area of development and to coordinate Departmental efforts with University initiatives.

*The Department of Ethnic Studies should report annually to the Dean of Arts & Sciences, with a copy to the Provost, on the implementation of these recommendations.*